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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: ALLIES SUPPORT MOREL, BUT MIXED ON GENEVA OUTCOMES
AND PROCESS

Classified By: CDA W. S. Reid, III, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Despite his claims of limited success, the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia and Georgia, Pierre Morel, underwhelmed many NATO PermReps with his account of the EU/UN/OSCE-sponsored talks on Georgia held in Geneva October 15. Morel admitted that the talks did not solve everything, but he placed a high premium on maintaining the process and seemed to claim success in creating a "multi-structural process," which de-emphasized timelines or clear positive results in favor of nurturing "fragile, vulnerable, political" dialogue. Mindful of the human dimension of the Georgia conflict and the approaching winter, Allies questioned when the issue of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) would come into view in November in working group one and underlined the importance of IDP return being addressed. They also underlined the importance of access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia for monitors and human rights workers as well as the delivery of humanitarian aid. Other Allies questioned when the issue of compliance under the six-point agreement will be resolved. END SUMMARY.

Light on substance, heavy on form

¶2. (C) At an extraordinary informal meeting of NATO PermReps October 23, Morel gave a detailed account of the diplomatic wrangling -- including the difficulties involved in getting the parties together -- leading up to the October 15 Geneva talks. He said his EU directive was to set up "discussions" rather than "negotiations," stressing that his first priority was fostering stability. In time, he hoped the discussions could address underlying security issues in Georgia and the issue of IDPs. Despite the fact that Russia was not present during the plenary session in Geneva, he argued that Russia was interested in continuing discussions; was influencing Abkhazia and South Ossetia to act in a constructive manner; and was irritated at the behavior of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian entities present at the talks. Morel reported that although Georgia was not present during the information session that followed the plenary session, it remains committed to the process.

¶3. (C) Seeking concrete solutions sooner rather than later, many Allies were less than impressed with Morel's claims of

success in merely formulating a process. The U.S. praised Morel for his efforts in getting the parties to the table, but pointed out that even he was probably not fully satisfied with the outcome of his labors so far (with which he readily agreed in Q and A.) Several Allies suggested tactical gestures to appeal to the "entities." The U.S. encouraged Morel to use alternative means, such as colored badges and Abkhaz/South Ossetian languages, to acknowledge the presence of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian entities, but maintained that they should not be given delegation status or plenary access (Morel later concurred.) The U.S. asked how the process can be molded to lead the parties to convergence rather than divergence. Bulgaria and Estonia warned that Russia might be using stall tactics to pressure the Georgians into capitulation before the onset of winter. The German PermRep, calling the process an emerging "waste of time" which he guessed was "unavoidable," likened the October 15 talks to the Minsk Group process (NOTE: Morel later defended the Minsk Group process, taking pride in its "decade long" prevention of violence and provision of a non-confrontational regional political dialogue in the South Caucasus. Several Allied PermReps, including the German, were visibly unpersuaded, clearly having mentioned the Minsk Process as a model to be avoided in the Geneva Georgia framework. END NOTE.) Turkey and the Czech Republic argued that Morel's efforts had not even resulted in the establishment of a process. Poland led several Allies (Italy, Hungary and Canada) in saying NATO should take actions complementary to the EU/UN/OSCE efforts. France was silent throughout the meeting.

Morel: "It won't get any worse"

14. (C) Allies attempted to refocus the effort, emphasizing that while the parties struggle with establishing a process, Russia continues to be in violation of the six-point agreement by maintaining troops in Akhalkgori and the Upper Kodori Valley. Lithuania, Bulgaria and Canada questioned whether Russia was doing all within its power to induce Abkhaz and South Ossetian officials to play a constructive role in the talks. Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria and Romania questioned if the talks will ever get past the process phase and address the real issues, including resolving the IDP crisis. In reply, Morel averred that, due to Karasin's high rank in the Russian hierarchy, and the importance Russia continues to attach to developing good relations with the EU, he had to conclude that it was serious in trying to make the talks constructive. He briefly admitted that the EU deemed "insufficient" the Russian withdrawal of troops under the six-point agreement, and explained that the working group formed to address the issue of IDPs will be co-moderated by the EU and UNHCR, "whose expertise will be valuable in avoiding the right of return issues which could bring everything to a halt in this track."

But he quickly returned to his main themes -- the value of establishing a process and the preservation of the EU-Russia relationship -- in touting the success of the talks. Concluding that "it won't get any worse from here," he took pride that the process survived the initial test, but acknowledged that there is much work to be done before the next round of talks on November 18.

REID